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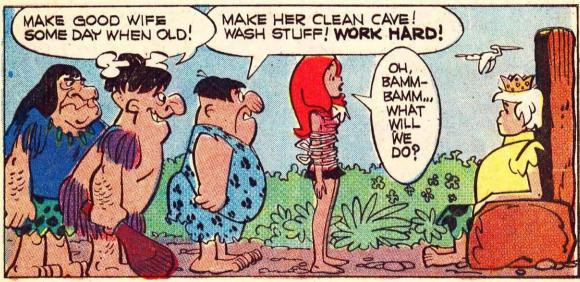






















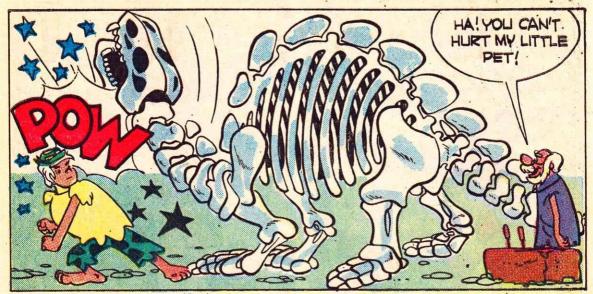


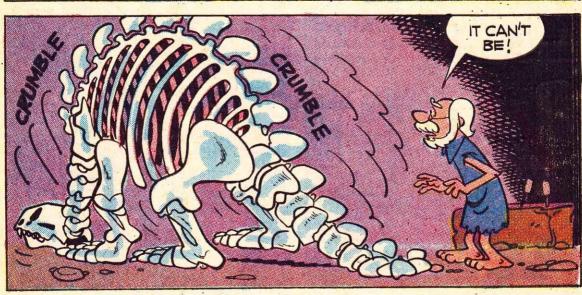














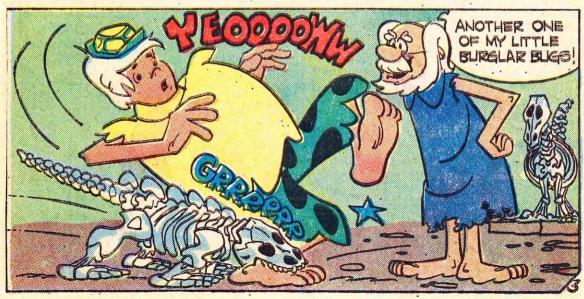
























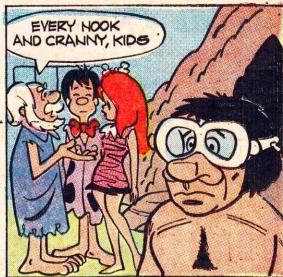












































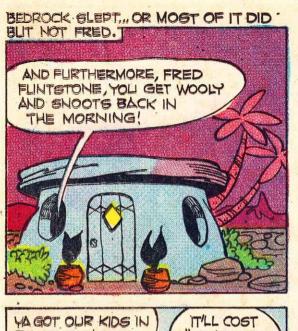
















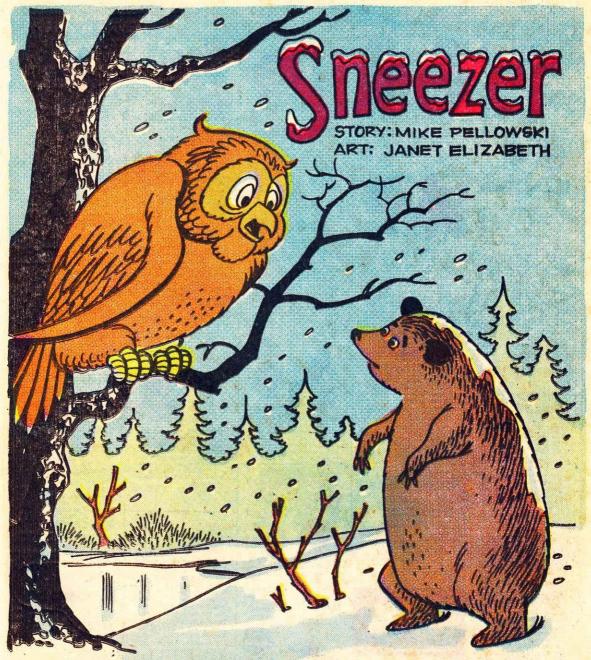












The wise, old owl ruffled his feathers. He attempted to warm up his cold body. It was chilly outside, and he was shivering. He felt better after he'd fluffed up his winter coat of feathers. He looked up at pillow-like, white clouds hevering above. The old owl sadly shook his head when he noticed tiny flakes of snow gently floating down towards the ground. The sight displeased him.

The animals who live in the wild do not like winter or the cold weather it brings. Food is scarce, and the hunting is poor during the winter. Only the strong, healthy animals are able to survive through the winter. It is the way of the jungle.

"Good night, Mr. Owl," called a big, brown bear who was slowly walking past the owl's tree. The owl

waved.

"Is it time for your long winter sleep, brother bear?"
asked the owl.

"Yes, the first snows are falling. It's time for me to fall asleep," answered the bear.

"I'll see you in the springtime," called the owl to his friend. The bear headed for his cave.

"Those bears have the right idea," quipped the awl.
"When winter arrives, they go into their caves. They
fall into a deep sleep. They eat so much before they fall
asleep, that they don't need to get up to eat or drink.
They just sleep and sleep throughout the entire winter.
Their long, winter sleep is called "hibernation". They
den't arise until spring arrives. They wake up again
when the sun is warm and there is plenty to eat.

The owl shook snowflakes off of his back. He pulled his head back inside the hollow, tree trunk. "The bears didn't always sleep through the cold winter. It was a long time ago, but I recall when the bears didn't take long, winter naps," said the owl.

The wise, old owl had lived in the forest ever since the first trees began to grow. He'd seen many things. He could tell many stories about his fellow animals. He knew about the strange things they did and why they did them.

"I remember that winter long ago when the first bear fell asleep for the winter," said the owl. "The hunted in the snow-covered woods for food. It all started on a windy, cold, winter afternoon. Sneezer was searching through snow drifts for food.

Sneezer "Ah-Chooing" from miles away whenever he

but didn't find anything to eat. He was tired, cold, hungry and as usual, sneezing loudly. He noticed a large cave in the side of a snow-covered mountain. "I think I'll go in 'dere to rest and warm up." Sneezer said. He wiped his nose and walked off towards the cave. He went inside. The cavern was cozy and warm.

Suddenly, he had a sneezing fit! He sneezed the biggest, loudest sneeze he'd ever sneezed! It was so



bear's name was "Sneezer". Sneezer was a gray, grizzly bear. He really didn't want to sleep through the winter. His long, deep, winter sleep was forced on him," confessed the owl.

"Sneezer told me the story of how he started the bears' fad of sleeping through winter. This is the story. of "How the first bear slept through winter"."

The winters during the early days of the forest were the worst ones in history. Food was very, very scarce. Some animals died because there wasn't enough food to est. Other animals froze to death because their fur or feathers were not heavy enough to keep them warm.

Sneezer's thick, furry, winter coat kept him warm; but not warm enough. Sneezer always caught a bad cold whenever the air turned chilly. In fact, that's how he got his name. He always caught a cold at the end of the fall season and it lasted until spring. He was always sneezing.

Sneezer sneezed all through the winter. His sneezes



loud that it started an avalanche! Tons of snow slid down the mountain side. Sneezer watched as the cave's entrance became completely blocked. He tried to dig his way out, but he realized that it was hopeless. He was trapped.

There was nothing to do inside the save. Sneezer decided to take a nap and wait for the snow to melt. He was very tired. He fell into a deep, deep sleep. He slept a long time. When he wake up, the snow was gone and so was his cold. It was spring! He got up and went out into the warm sunshine.

He told other bears about his long nap. They all liked the idea of a long, winter nap and decided to try it next winter. Ever since then, bears have slept through winters in warm, cozy caves.









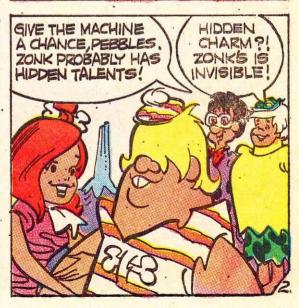




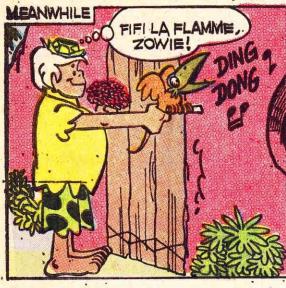




























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